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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) An apparatus for closing bags (11) using plastic closures (2) that are individually separable one after another from a closure strip (18) being conveyed in a feeding channel (25), said closures (2) having a plate-like shape and being linked to one another by means of connecting tabs (2a-d), wherein the closures (2) are slid with an opening (16) having a slit on one side onto a bag neck (12) by means of a shaped stamp (5) having a holder for receiving the closure (2), said neck (12) having been gathered into a ruche (13) using gathering means (3), characterized in that the shaped stamp (5) has an associated separating stamp (4) and that the feeding channel (25) is located in the same plane with the closure strip (18), said plane being disposed orthogonal to the plane of movement of the stamps (4, 5).

2. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that the separating stamp (4) has at least one finger (4a) and the shaped stamp

(5) has a fork head (6) with fingers (7, 8, 9, 9'), and that a  
the shaped stamp (5) and the separating stamp (4) are designed  
such that first the separating stamp (4) and then the shaped  
stamp (5) are movable vertically upward initially for a first  
separation process of the closure (2) from the closure strip  
(18), after which the shaped stamp (5) during standstill of  
the separating stamp (4) is subsequently movable vertically  
upward separately for a swiveling process, for a second  
separation process of the closure (2) from the closure strip  
(18), and for receiving the closure (2) in the fork head (6),  
and the shaped stamp (5) is subsequently vertically movable  
back down together with the separating stamp (4) into a  
starting position.

3. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus  
according to claim ~~1~~ ~~or~~ 2, characterized in that the fork head  
(6) of the shaped stamp (5) has two fingers (7, 8) in a front  
plane and two fingers (9, 9') in a rear plane located parallel  
to the former, and that the finger pairs (7, 8 ~~and~~ 9, 9')  
located in one plane are spaced apart by a recess in each  
case.

4. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus  
according to claim 3, characterized in that a groove (10) for

receiving the closure (2) is implemented in each case between two opposed fingers (7, 9~~and~~<sub>i</sub>8, 9').

5. (Original) A closing apparatus according to claim 4, characterized in that the grooves (10) are located in a plane parallel to the front and rear planes of the fork head (6).

6. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to ~~one or more of claims 3 through 5~~ claim 3, characterized in that the length of the fingers (7, 8) of the front plane is longer by approximately two thirds than the length of the fingers (9, 9') of the rear plane, and that the finger (7) facing the feeding channel (25) is designed slightly longer than the finger (8) located in the same plane facing away from the feeding channel.

7. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to ~~one or more of claims 3 through 6~~ claim 3, characterized in that the fingers (9, 9') of the rear plane incorporate a bezel in each case facing the fingers (7, 8) of the front plane.

8. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to ~~one or more of claims 1 through 7~~ claim 6, characterized in that the finger (7) facing the feeding

channel (25) of the fork head (6) of the shaped stamp (~~25~~) is disposed centrically between the tabs (2a, 2b) under the edge being separated of the closure (2).

9. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to ~~one or more of claims 1 through 8~~ claim 8, characterized in that the finger (4a) of the separating stamp (4) is disposed under the tab (2a) of the closure (2) to be separated during the first separation process.

10. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to ~~one or more of claims 1 through 9~~ claim 2, characterized in that above the horizontal plane of the feeding channel (25), an end stop (26) is disposed on the vertical longitudinal axis centered between the fingers (9, 9') of the rear plane of the fork head (6), about which end stop (26) the closure (2) is swiveled from its horizontal plane into the vertical plane of the fork ~~head~~ head (6) by means of the vertical upward movement of the fork head (6).

11. (Original) A closing apparatus according to claim 10, characterized in that the end stop (26) is the head of a cylinder head screw.

12. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to claim 10 ~~or 11~~, characterized in that the end

stop (26) during advancement of the closure strip (18) is a guide means for the closure (2) being separated.

13. (Currently Amended) A closing apparatus according to ~~one or more of claims 1 through 12~~ claim 2, characterized in that the separating stamp (4) and the shaped stamp (5) and ~~for~~ the finger (4a) of the separating stamp are disposed on the fork head (6) of the shaped stamp (5) sliding on one another or spaced apart in vertical parallel planes.